

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
Oral History Project
California Civil Liberties Public Education Program Grant

Oral History Interview

with

KENNETH KANETO KINOSHITA

July 26-27, 1999
San Jose, California

By
Taeko Joanne Ono Iritani

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Florin JACL Oral History Project

Japanese American Citizens League, Florin Chapter

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MISSION STATEMENT

To collect and preserve the historical record of the multigenerational experience of Japanese Americans and others who befriended them. The books produced will enhance the California State University, Sacramento/Japanese American Archival Collection (CSUS/JAAC) housed in the CSUS Archives for study, research, teaching and exhibition. This unique collection of life histories provides a permanent resource for the use of American and international scholars, researchers and faculty, as well as a lesson for future generations to appreciate the process of protecting and preserving the United States Constitution and America's democratic principles.

PREFACE

The Florin JACL Oral History Project provides completed books and tapes of Oral Histories presented to the interviewed subjects, to the California State University, Sacramento/Japanese American Archival Collection (CSUS/JAAC), and to the Florin JACL Chapter. Copyright is held by the Florin JACL Chapter and California State University, Sacramento. Photocopying is limited to a maximum of 20 pages per volume.

This project will continue the mission of the Florin JACL Oral History Project which began in 1987 and recognized the necessity of interviewing Japanese Americans: "We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their seventies, eighties and nineties. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness." This same urgency to conduct interviews was felt by the North Central Valley JACL Chapters of French Camp, Lodi, Placer County, and Stockton in 1997-98 as a consortium joining the Florin Chapter in obtaining funding from the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (CLPEF). And now, again under the Florin Chapter banner, more life histories will be told with the generous funding from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP).

The Oral Histories in the Japanese American Archival Collection relate the personal stories of the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal and internment of American citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry. There is a wide variety of interviews of former internees, military personnel, people who befriended the Japanese Americans, Caucasians who worked in the internment camps and others, whose stories will serve to inform the public of the fundamental injustice of the government's action in the detention of the Japanese aliens and "non-aliens" (the government's designation of U.S. citizens), so that the causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood.

The population of those who lived through the World War II years is rapidly diminishing, and in a few years, will altogether vanish. Their stories must be preserved for the historians and researchers today and in the future.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER

Taeko Joanne Ono Iritani is a Florin JACL member and present chair of the Oral History Committee, President in 1996-97, Education Chair, and retired special education teacher with a master's degree from California State University, Bakersfield.

INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

July 26-27, 1999
The Kaneto Kinoshita home
6182 Oneida Drive
San Jose CA 95123

TRANSCRIBING AND EDITING

Transcribing, word processing and editing by Taeko Joanne Iritani

PHOTOGRAPHY

All photographs were supplied by Kaneto and Michie Kinoshita and laser color copied by Taeko Joanne Iritani

TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes will be kept by the Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, 2000 State University Drive East, Sacramento, California 95819-6039.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

This interview with Kenneth Kaneto Kinoshita was conducted at his home in San Jose to obtain information of his experiences. Of particular interest is the fact that Kaneto came to America as a six month old infant, and until he obtained his naturalization in 1952, he was considered an *Issei* ineligible to United States citizenship, an enemy alien during World War II.

Before the war began in December, 1941, Kaneto's two brothers had been drafted into the United States Army. In March, 1942, Kaneto's father and cousin were arrested by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents. Before Kaneto could go to inquire about his father, two FBI agents came to arrest him at his home. Kaneto never learned why he was arrested.

He was detained in the Kern County jail, Tujunga Immigration Facility and Santa Fe, New Mexico Department of Justice Internment. He stayed at Santa Fe only a few months, but the fact that he was arrested at all is a mystery to him

Kaneto Kinoshita was born in 1912 to Kanetaro Kinoshita and Hisayo Ogawa Kinoshita in Hiroshima, Japan. He was brought by his mother to America when he was six months old and lived in Bakersfield where his father worked as a boilermaker and chief machinist for the Santa Fe Railroad Company. In 1918, his mother died during the Spanish influenza epidemic, leaving three young sons. His father took the children to Japan, left them in the care of various relatives, and later returned to Japan to marry his wife's cousin. The entire family then returned to Bakersfield.

Kaneto was educated in the Bakersfield schools through junior college. He had hoped to make pharmacy his profession, but learned that he, as an *Issei*, would be unable to obtain a license. He began farming with his brother Jim Hisato Kinoshita who, as a United States citizen, was able to purchase land in his own name.

Kaneto married Michie Nakamura in 1940 and lived on the family farm until his arrest on March 26, 1942. Eugene was born in February, 1941 and Gerald on March 16, 1942. Ten days later, Kaneto's father, cousin and he were arrested by the FBI. Left at the family farm were his stepmother, sister, wife, a toddler thirteen months old and an infant ten days old. This group was evacuated to Poston, Arizona in early May, 1942.

After interrogation by a lawyer in Santa Fe Detention, Kaneto and his father were able to join their families in Poston on July 4, 1942. He held various jobs in Poston including block manager of Block 6.

Following the end of the war, Kaneto took his family to Arkansas where he had a dismal experience as a sharecropper farmer. In November, 1946 he returned to Bakersfield with his family, farmed successfully in the Buttonwillow area, contracted Valley Fever, worked as a gardener on a large estate, and began gardening on his own.

Their three sons are successful dentists in San Jose where Kaneto and Michie Kinoshita moved in 1997 to be near their sons and their families. Kaneto had a light stroke in 1998 and after rehabilitation appears to be functioning very well. Despite some aches and pains Kaneto and Michie are living happy, fulfilled lives.

[Session 1, July 26, 1999]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

J. IRITANI: I am Joanne Iritani with the Florin JACL [Japanese American Citizens League] Oral History Project. Today's date is July 26, 1999. I am interviewing [Kenneth] Kaneto Kinoshita at his home in San Jose. Present during this interview are Kaneto, his wife Michie, my husband Frank [Iritani] and I.

I decided to interview Kaneto for his experience during World War II when he and his father were arrested by the F.B.I [Federal Bureau of Investigation], leaving his mother, sister, his wife with their toddler and infant sons.

But first, we shall begin at the beginning, and that is with your parents. Could you tell us about your parents, their background, where they were from, and whatever you have been told about them, and then move on to when you were born?

- K. KINOSHITA: All right. My father [Kanetaro Kinoshita] came [from Hiroshima Japan] to Hawaii [in 1896] a couple of years before the Spanish American War. And worked there three or four years, then moved to Santa Fe Railroad and worked at Needles [California], Barstow [California], and Williams in Arizona as a section foreman. Then, one spring the railroad bridge came down so he had to repair it so that the railroad could go through. And after the superintendent watched him do the job, he decided to promote him and give him a job as boilermaker in Bakersfield, California. In 1911, he went back to Japan to get married.
- J. IRITANI: In Hiroshima [Japan]?
- K. KINOSHITA: In Hiroshima. The paperwork wasn't okay. . . .
- J. IRITANI: Do you know what the relationship between your mother's family and your father's family was? Nothing.
- K. KINOSHITA: So my father wanted to get married with my mother [Hisayo Ogawa Kinoshita] and take her back to America. The paperwork wasn't complete, so she had to stay behind. And I was born on January second, 1912. But, I wasn't quite large enough when I was born--I only weighed about five pounds, so my uncle said, "Well, he's

going to die anyway." But after a couple of months, find out I'm still alive, and so they finally registered me, February 11, 1912. And my mother took me to America with my cousin at the same time.

J. IRITANI: And your cousin was. . .

K. KINOSHITA: [Tomoichi] Tom Kinoshita.

J. IRITANI: Oh, he came the same time?

K. KINOSHITA: *Yobiyose*. [A person who is called to come to America by a resident alien.] He came.

J. IRITANI: He came *yobiyose*. His father was already over here, then.

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.

J. IRITANI: Okay.

K. KINOSHITA: I came when I was about six months old and lived in Bakersfield in the Santa Fe [Railroad Company's] camp. There was a Mexican camp and a Japanese camp. [There were] about thirty men and five women.

J. IRITANI: In the Japanese camp.

K. KINOSHITA: The Japanese camp. And I remember when I was about four years old, they discontinued the camp. So we had to move from there to Eighth Street.

J. IRITANI: That's the number eight?

K. KINOSHITA: Eighth.

- J. IRITANI: "H"?
- K. KINOSHITA: Eight. Number.
- J. IRITANI: The number eight. Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: Eighth Street. We lived there and our mother made everything from scratch. Konnyaku [yam starch cake], tofu [bean curd cake], noodles. She was a good cook. And during the Spanish influenza in 1917-18, she died on Armistice night, November 11, 1918. And so, my father took me back to Japan.
- J. IRITANI: Before you went to Japan, your two brothers were born already?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Jim [Hisato] was two years younger and Sid [Sadao] another two years younger. And then we were all taken care of by different relatives.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, each one sent to a different one? So you. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: So, I didn't see my brothers for a long time.
- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h.
- K. KINOSHITA: About two times, three times a year. And then my father [returned to Japan and] married my mother's cousin [Maki Nakagawa]. He came back to America again. We went to Japanese school [in Japan], but didn't learn anything,

because we always got in a fight with a bunch of Japanese because they think we were outsiders.

J. IRITANI: Yes, yes. And your language when you came back [to America], it was just Japanese.

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, when I came back, I only spoke Japanese.

J. IRITANI: That's right.

K. KINOSHITA: Forgot all the English. I started at William Penn School when I was eight years old. And then I went two, three years there, then in Roosevelt Grammar School started fourth grade. I went there six months in the fourth grade, and then skipped one year more. And then went to Lowell School finishing five and six. Then we finished Emerson School.

J. IRITANI: That was a junior high school.

K. KINOSHITA: Junior high. And then went to high school [Kern County Union High School]. Finished high school 1932, and then graduated from [Bakersfield] Junior College two years and graduated in 1934. We only had 120 graduating students. Then I wanted to be a pharmacist, but didn't have citizenship, so I heard they're not going to give. . .

J. IRITANI: Could you tell a little about the classes that you did take in junior college?

- K. KINOSHITA: I took two years calculus, differential and integral calculus.
- J. IRITANI: Differential and what?
- K. KINOSHITA: Integral. Integral.
- J. IRITANI: Integral. Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: Calculus.
- J. IRITANI: I did not take calculus. [Chuckle]
- K. KINOSHITA: And engineer physics which was pretty good, I made good grades. Organic chemistry, I made a "C" grade. After I found out I wouldn't get a pharmacy license, I quit and went into farming with my brother [Jim].
- J. IRITANI: Did you begin farming by yourself, or. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: No, with my brother.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, Jim was already involved in this? And that was there at the Garnsey [Avenue] farm?
- K. KINOSHITA: Then, [early in] 1941, he was drafted into the [United States] Army.
- J. IRITANI: Do you remember about which month he was drafted?
- K. KINOSHITA: Oh. . .
- J. IRITANI: Very early in the year?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Early in 1941.
- J. IRITANI: But you were married. . . . You didn't mention Michie. We'd better mention Michie [Nakamura]. [Chuckles]

- K. KINOSHITA: I was married. . .
- J. IRITANI: Tell us, before you got married, how it was arranged.
- K. KINOSHITA: My father and her father came to America same time. So there was no need of checking the backgrounds of the families. So, [inaudible] she was a *Kibei* [a person born in America and educated in Japan] and she finished *Jogakko*. She was going to come back in 1939, back to Fresno. And so I waited.
- J. IRITANI: The family arranged for you to meet? Had they planned?
- K. KINOSHITA: Tom [Kaneto's cousin] Kinoshita helped us to arrange for the marriage. We married in 1940. In 1941. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: February, [1940]
- J. IRITANI: February?
- K. KINOSHITA: February 28, [1941], we had Gene [Eugene], born baby. Then March 16, [1942] we had Jerry [Gerald] born.
- J. IRITANI: In 1942.
- K. KINOSHITA: In 1942, yeah. And then ten days later, the F.B.I. [Federal Bureau of Investigation] picked up my cousin [Tom Kinoshita]. He was the *Nihonjinkai* [Japanese Association] *kanji*..
- J. IRITANI: What position was he in the *Nihonjinkai*? That was Tom Kinoshita.

K. KINOSHITA: Secretary.

J. IRITANI: He was secretary.

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. He was picked up in the morning, and then at 12:00 o'clock, they came and picked up my father. And then about. . . I was going to the courthouse, F.B.I. . .

J. IRITANI: Oh, to see about your father, you were going?

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Why they pick him up. Then about two o'clock they came and asked if my name is Kaneto Kinoshita. They asked me. Then they picked me up. I don't know why they picked me up. But, then three more Japanese from Bakersfield and about twenty from Delano [in northern Kern County]. And then we spent two nights in the Bakersfield jail, and then they sent us to Tujunga Immigration Facility. Then we stayed there about ten days. And they shipped us to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There was snow in Santa Fe and high elevation and we'd do all our chores. A few people wasn't able to work, so I took turns doing their chores for them. I was the youngest of about a couple of thousand people there. And then the fourth of July, they released us. Before they released us, the Army lawyer interviewed me and asked me all kinds of questions. He asked me why I wasn't

naturalized, and I told him that all orientals wasn't eligible for naturalizaion. And he didn't know that. A few days later, a couple of days before the fourth of July, they released us.

J. IRITANI: All three of you?

K. KINOSHITA: No, no. Just my father and I.

J. IRITANI: Just you two?

K. KINOSHITA: Yes. And then we came back to Poston, Arizona [Relocation Center] on the fourth of July.

J. IRITANI: Your family had gone in to Poston in May?

K. KINOSHITA: My wife with two little babies. One about two months old and one, one year old. They came in to Poston, the first group to be in Poston.

J. IRITANI: It was actually a group that was there to prepare for the rest of us. And they were the group that helped to register the rest of us when we finally arrived. I know that.

At this point, let me ask Michie about that experience. We really didn't talk about how the war [World War II] started, and how you felt when the war started. But, since we are talking about the time that they went into Poston, I would like Michie to talk a little bit about how it was. What you had to do to go into camp.

You were without your husband and your father-in-law.
And it was just you, and your mother-in-law, and your
two sister [in-law] and two babies. Can you recall the
things you had to do?

M. KINOSHITA: [Shakes her head.]

J. IRITANI: Not too much? You just did it!

M. KINOSHITA: That's to take care of the two babies. I can't think. . .

J. IRITANI: Anything special?

M. KINOSHITA: No.

J. IRITANI: You know, whenever we talk to people about how the
people were interned, we always say, "and it's only what
you could carry." With you, only what you could carry
was your babies and what they needed.

M. KINOSHITA: Uh-hm. Yeah. Their clothes and my clothes.

J. IRITANI: And your diapers.

M. KINOSHITA: Yeah.

J. IRITANI: There were no "Huggies" and "Pampers" disposables at
that time.

M. KINOSHITA: Yeah. [Chuckles]

K. KINOSHITA: She told me that Jerry had trouble with eating and
vomiting and all that. He couldn't take milk like the rest
of them.

- J. IRITANI: When you were traveling? You don't remember that?
- M. KINOSHITA: Well, he was pretty young to take fresh milk.
- J. IRITANI: Yes. Oh, yes. And you weren't able to nurse him?
- M. KINOSHITA: No, so. . .
- J. IRITANI: Oh, you couldn't nurse him at all?
- M. KINOSHITA: No.
- J. IRITANI: You dried up.
- M. KINOSHITA: Not enough for. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: She was worried and all. . .
- J. IRITANI: Yes, so, you dried up.
- M. KINOSHITA: Uh-hm.
- J. IRITANI: Yeah.
- M. KINOSHITA: So, he took fresh milk, but I'm glad he didn't get sick or anything.
- J. IRITANI: Yeah, he's too young for that. At that point.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then, 1944? Denny was born.
- J. IRITANI: Before that. Before Denny was born, was Sid [Kaneto's youngest brother] with you people, or was he already in the service, too? I forgot about him.
- K. KINOSHITA: Sid, Sadao, he was taken in the service about three or four months after Jim was taken.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, both in before the war?

- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Then he was sent to Florida. They didn't know what to do with him. Then he went to Fort Leonard Wood, I don't know where that is.
- F. IRITANI: Fort Leonard Wood? It sounds like Missouri.
- K. KINOSHITA: Huh?
- F. IRITANI: Missouri?
- K. KINOSHITA: Oh, it must be around there.
- F. IRITANI: Fort Leonard Wood? Someplace, it's Missouri.
- J. IRITANI: And in the meantime, where was Jim?
- K. KINOSHITA: Already in the Solomon Islands [in the Pacific War Theater].
- J. IRITANI: But, before the war started was when he was drafted.
- K. KINOSHITA: Oh-oh. He went to San Louis Obispo, [California] and then Washington maneuver, came back for guard duty in Mountain View, California, and then the war started, they sent him to Camp Walter, Texas. Then they [the Army] find out they needed intelligence people that could speak Japanese and English, they sent him to Minnesota, I guess.
- J. IRITANI: Camp Savage, [Minnesota]?
- K. KINOSHITA: Camp Savage, yeah, yeah.
- J. IRITANI: I think he mentioned one time, he went into Savage.

- K. KINOSHITA: He went. . .
- J. IRITANI: And then he went to the Solomon Islands.
- K. KINOSHITA: Solomon Islands. He saw action there.
- J. IRITANI: Right.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then, two army men always went with him, because to guard him, so nobody will shoot him.
- J. IRITANI: That's right. That's right. I heard that.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then. . .
- J. IRITANI: Well, I'm going to be interviewing him later when I go to Bakersfield, so I'll get his story.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then, he stayed till six months after the war ended [August 14, 1945] in Japan. They needed a translator. . .
- J. IRITANI: That's right. So he stayed only six months over there.
- In the meantime, you know, we really didn't touch on how hard and what happened at that time. Do you remember? Were you at church that day? On December 7, 1941?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, I don't remember.
- J. IRITANI: Because I remember Reverend [Dillon] Throckmorton came that night to our church. You don't know about that night? Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: I . . . I don't remember.

- J. IRITANI: All right. Let's go ahead with what happened after you were at Santa Fe, [New Mexico]. Was there anything special that you remember about the time that you were in prison? At any of those places?
- K. KINOSHITA: I was interviewed by a young lawyer. . .
- J. IRITANI: And you never were interviewed before that?
- K. KINOSHITA: He asked me why I'm there, because I was the youngest one in the group. And I said I don't know why I'm here. But, I presume, I was an enemy alien and I was draft age. And he asked me why you speak good English? I said, "Well, that's my primary language. That's all I know." Because I went as far as Junior College and spoke nothing but English. He thought it was kinda. . . and I told him my two brothers were already in the service. So, I guess he thought it was kinda harmful for me to stay there.
- J. IRITANI: So, soon after that, you were. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: I was released.
- J. IRITANI: . . . released to go to Poston.
- K. KINOSHITA: [When I] came back, there were a bunch of people from Watsonville and Salinas with their fur coats. The fourth of July.
- J. IRITANI: At the Parker, [Arizona train] station?

- K. KINOSHITA: The Parker station.
- F. IRITANI: Why don't we wait here and let me change this.
[Interruption]
- J. IRITANI: All right, we're at Parker station and you have been sent back from Santa Fe.
- K. KINOSHITA: They weren't expecting us to be picked up, so we were trucked the same time as people from Watsonville, Monterey, and that's the way we got home [to Poston]. In Poston, I helped farming by. . .
- J. IRITANI: That was your job, to work on the farm?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: And what was your pay?
- K. KINOSHITA: \$12.00. [Chuckles]
- J. IRITANI: Yours was \$12.00 a month [said with emphasis].
- K. KINOSHITA: Twelve dollars a month and we worked in the one hundred ten degree heat.
- J. IRITANI: That's right.
- K. KINOSHITA: I drove a Fordson tractor to level the ground.
- J. IRITANI: You drove a what?
- K. KINOSHITA: Fordson tractor.
- F. IRITANI: Fordson.
- J. IRITANI: How do you spell that?

K. KINOSHITA: Fordson.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

J. IRITANI: Fordson is how it's spelled.

K. KINOSHITA: Fordson tractor, and working in that hot, one hundred ten degree heat. Dusty. Worked on that for a while. And then later, I worked to load up the food supply for the kitchens. And I did that job for about three or four months.

J. IRITANI: That's distributing the food to all the different blocks. All the different kitchens.

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. all that. Then, they had a strike in Poston and nobody wanted to be a block manager. And they [the people in the block] found that I was in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and released. And they found out my two brothers were in the service already. Nobody wanted to be a block manager, so they wanted me to be the block manager.

J. IRITANI: Who asked you to be the block manager? Do you remember?

K. KINOSHITA: Oh, most guys.

J. IRITANI: That's people in your block? Which block were you in?

- K. KINOSHITA: Block 6.
- J. IRITANI: You were in 6. And so the other people who were living in the block asked you to be the manager.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. So, I did block manager until the end of the war.
- J. IRITANI: Until you. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Moved.
- J. IRITANI: Until you left. Can you tell us what kind of work a block manager did?
- [Chuckles]
- F. IRITANI: A tough job. Trouble shooter, huh?
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, we had to. . .
- J. IRITANI: Can you think of some interesting. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: When they do any voting or when they get the monthly checks. . .
- J. IRITANI: Oh, it went through your office? And you said voting. Voting for what?
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, anything that came up.
- J. IRITANI: Within the block, or within the camp?
- K. KINOSHITA: In the camp. Then after the group of block managers have a meeting, something new come up, we have to go to. . .
- J. IRITANI: You had to go to the meetings of the block managers over in the Administration section?

- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: And that's once a month?
- K. KINOSHITA: Whenever they called.
- J. IRITANI: Whenever they called. Did you have a telephone in your office? How did they let you know?
- K. KINOSHITA: I don't remember.
- J. IRITANI: There had to be some sort of. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: They must have had a. . .
- J. IRITANI: Had a car that they sent over, huh?
- F. IRITANI: Do you remember when you had the loyalty questions? You know, 26 and 27?
- K. KINOSHITA: I had nothing to do with that.
- F. IRITANI: Oh, you didn't. . .
- J. IRITANI: You didn't have to answer those?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, I'm alien.
- J. IRITANI: No, but I thought all the *Issei* answered, too. See, I didn't because I was too young.
- K. KINOSHITA: Only Nisei.
- J. IRITANI: Only the Nisei did. Oh-h. Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: So, I told everybody in the block that we have to stay in the camp and be peaceful, not make a lot of strike and things, you know.

- J. IRITANI: Were there some people in your block that were involved in that strike?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Omori. The old man was a ringleader.
- F. IRITANI: What was the strike about? What were they striking? Why?
- K. KINOSHITA: All right. What was that. . .
- F. IRITANI: Bad food, or. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: No, no.
- J. IRITANI: I heard Saburo Kido [National Japanese American Citizens League President] was beaten up. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Saburo Kido got beaten up. . .
- J. IRITANI: And then they arrested some guys. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: And then, that's why. . .
- J. IRITANI: And that was the reason for the strike. To protest that. Was that it? I just remember. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: I don't know what's the reason, but anyway. . . . Don't make a mess out of it. Just stay quiet and peaceful. Live day to day until the war's over.
- J. IRITANI: One thing I know that happened in Block 6 was, there was a fire of one of the barracks.
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, that fire was people that made mesquite charcoal. It was not thoroughly cured.

- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h. So . . .
- K. KINOSHITA: The fire started. And that crazy guy brought it in.
- J. IRITANI: I don't know how charcoal was made. Did you make any?
- K. KINOSHITA: No. You get mesquite wood and they fire it and you get like half burnt. And then you fire it.
- J. IRITANI: Once it's half burnt, it's ready as charcoal?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, burnt through it. . . not being into ash. And then they cover it or something.
- J. IRITANI: Oh-h. With sand or something?
- K. KINOSHITA: I don't know.
- J. IRITANI: How was it distributed? How was the charcoal. . . I remember carrying a small gallon bucket to school that first winter of '42 because we didn't have any heater. Oil heater I guess is what eventually was put in. But we didn't have any heat.
- K. KINOSHITA: I don't know how they make it.
- J. IRITANI: But we carried charcoal. So that's what caused that fire. And did the whole barrack burn? Do you remember?
- K. KINOSHITA: That whole building, one building burned.
- J. IRITANI: Completely burned down. I remember we saw the smoke and Dorothy Omori lived in your block. I remember

she started running. . . we all ran out of that classroom.

That was very scary seeing a fire like that.

K. KINOSHITA: Tar paper. . .

J. IRITANI: Tar paper, right. Everything that can burn. But that was the only fire, I think in camp, wasn't it? I never heard of another one.

M. KINOSHITA: That's the only one we remember, that's only one fire.

K. KINOSHITA: When we came back [from Santa Fe, NM], I didn't have no place to go, so my father, we had to stay in the same. . .

J. IRITANI: In the barrack room. So there were. . .

K. KINOSHITA: Then after people left for Tule Lake [segregation center], then we moved. . .

J. IRITANI: To another room. Oh-h-h. So when you first came back there was your father, and mother, stepmother, and Yosh and. . .

K. KINOSHITA: No, Yosh was already married [to Guy Murotani].

J. IRITANI: Oh, she was already married? That's right. She was married in 1941, right before. . .

M. KINOSHITA: Right after we got married.

J. IRITANI: You were married in 1940. And she was married in 1941. So they lived in the next block over, was it? 13? And you all lived in 6. Still, that's three, your sister [Phyllis

Toshiko], and mother and father, and you two. That's five adults and two little babies.

M. KINOSHITA: Uh-m. You know, one room.

J. IRITANI: In one room. [Each room was 20' x 25'.]

M. KINOSHITA: They made a partition?

J. IRITANI: You made your own partition in the room? Most people did something.

M. KINOSHITA: Yeah, until people moved to Tule Lake.

F. IRITANI: Were there a lot of people that moved to Tule Lake?

K. KINOSHITA: No-no boys.

J. IRITANI: We didn't notice too many from our block. Not too many from our block.

K. KINOSHITA: That Omori old man was. . .

J. IRITANI: Did he go?

K. KINOSHITA: No.

J. IRITANI: He was a talker. . .

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, instigate other guys to go, but then he had two boys?

M. KINOSHITA: Uh-m.

K. KINOSHITA: Then after the war, they went and served. And then they got the Army right to go to school.

J. IRITANI: Oh, yeah. The G.I. Bill. So that Mr. Omori never left camp at that time when he was encouraging others. There

weren't too many like that in your block? Some others?
A few? Uh-huh.

K. KINOSHITA: But, you know if you want two kids to be in the service, you shouldn't instigate somebody else you know, to go to Tule Lake.

J. IRITANI: What other things occurred in camp that you remember, either one of you, that stick out in your mind, any activities?

M. KINOSHITA: No.

K. KINOSHITA: I didn't do much.

J. IRITANI: You didn't? I remember all the movies we used to go to, and things like that and the sports events. But you were not participants in those things. And your babies. . . Did Gene start in the nursery?

M. KINOSHITA: No.

J. IRITANI: He was too young for that, too. And then you had Denny in camp. How was the facility, the hospital? It was fine, as far as your birth was concerned? Your doctors?

M. KINOSHITA: Yes, uh-huh.

J. IRITANI: Of course, you didn't have to worry the way you did with Jerry and the milk. So, it was easier for you?

M. KINOSHITA: Uh-hm.

- K. KINOSHITA: Like Higashi that used to live near Weedpatch?[A small rural community east of Bakersfield.]
- J. IRITANI: You're talking about Paul's family?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, no, no.
- J. IRITANI: Another one?
- K. KINOSHITA: She didn't have kids.
- J. IRITANI: I didn't know any Higashi in Weedpatch.
- M. KINOSHITA: They used to live in Block 6. They came from the same place from Japan where he was from.
- K. KINOSHITA: She kind of took care of Gene.
- M. KINOSHITA: Well, she liked to be busy. She always come to help me.
- J. IRITANI: That was good.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then we went to Arkansas.
- J. IRITANI: And that was after the war ended. In September or October you went in 1945? Could you tell us about your experience in Arkansas? I know it was not a positive experience, but that's okay. But that's all right to tell about, too.
- K. KINOSHITA: We went to Arkansas. . .
- J. IRITANI: You were given how much money by the government to leave? Do you remember? Some people have mentioned \$25 that they received on leaving.

- K. KINOSHITA: We went to St. Louis, Missouri. And then from there we went south on the west side of the Mississippi River on the Frisco Line.
- J. IRITANI: The what?
- K. KINOSHITA: Frisco. Like San Francisco. Only Frisco.
- J. IRITANI: It was called Frisco? Ah. Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: And then, on the way there, we were crowded on the train, and as soon as we crossed the. . . what's the line?
- J. IRITANI: The state line?
- K. KINOSHITA: North and west?
- J. IRITANI: You're talking about the Mason-Dixon Line?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. The Mason-Dixon Line. Anyway, half the passengers was in the train. We told the *kurochan* [Negro] to come over and "Move in here," and he said, "We can't do that."
- J. IRITANI: And that was the first time that you knew about Jim Crow laws.
- K. KINOSHITA: First time I realized that we were segregated.
- J. IRITANI: Yeah, you were right in the middle of things, even in Arkansas. It's not deep, deep south, but it's still south. So down there you were. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Then, we farmed in Arkansas. . .

- J. IRITANI: That was at Wilson?
- K. KINOSHITA: Wilson, Arkansas. About 40 miles from Memphis, Tennessee.
- J. IRITANI: How many acres?
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, we were doing about 20 acres, to plant whatever we want.
- J. IRITANI: Plant whatever you want, but it was still a sharecropping?
- K. KINOSHITA: Sharecrop.
- J. IRITANI: And what were the rules for this?
- K. KINOSHITA: Tomatoes and. . .
- J. IRITANI: How much of it would go to the landowner.
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, it was supposed to have been fifty-fifty. But, we joined the transportation company.
- J. IRITANI: Transportation. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: [Inaudible] from farm to the market. And then crates, boxes, they charged. So in the end, it was seventy five-twenty five.
- J. IRITANI: They were getting the seventy five?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: So that all that work that you were doing. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: And then we picked cotton after they picked over.
- J. IRITANI: Then, how much. . .?

- K. KINOSHITA: That's working for ten hours and \$3.00 a day.
- J. IRITANI: And you lived in a house that was owned by the . . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Company.
- J. IRITANI: Company. Did you have to pay additional rent for the house?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, no rent, but we had to burn coal, coal stove, pot-bellied stove.
- J. IRITANI: And you had to buy the coal?
- K. KINOSHITA: You had to buy your own coal and if you want to cook breakfast, you got to get up early. . .
- J. IRITANI: Go ahead and tell about your sharecropping days.
- K. KINOSHITA: Sharecropping. It was supposed to have been fifty-fifty, we had to pay for the crates, boxes and transportation, so in the end, it come to be seventy five percent for them and twenty five percent for us. And no way to make a living. If you go into debt, you never pay yourself out of that. So in one year, we. . .
- J. IRITANI: So, you were there just the one year? And that was a hardship. In addition, while you were there, you had a physical accident, or something happened to Jerry. Could you describe what happened then?

- K. KINOSHITA: Jerry. . . the John Deere tractor, Jerry got on the driver's seat and barely turned the wheel, and the other kids pushing it back and forth and. . .
- J. IRITANI: Oh, it was just children playing around the tractor?
- K. KINOSHITA: And then he came sliding down and cut his leg and we had to go to the hospital twenty miles away.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, my.
- K. KINOSHITA: And I stayed with him and then the doctor and the hospital didn't charge any. . .
- J. IRITANI: Not at all? Oh, my.
- K. KINOSHITA: Because they thought we were penniless.
- J. IRITANI: Was Jerry in the hospital long? They repaired him. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: One month.
- J. IRITANI: One month, oh my. And he was still, what, three, no, four years old?
- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah. The doctor just came back from overseas. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: He came back from [inaudible]
- M. KINOSHITA: And [inaudible] thing too.
- J. IRITANI: Yeah. You were fortunate. And it has not affected Jerry after that, at all.
- M. KINOSHITA: No.

- J. IRITANI: I remember one time when we were talking about that experience, and you [Kaneto] were saying how really strong Michie was.
- M. KINOSHITA: He was almost to faint.
- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h.
- M. KINOSHITA: But I feel somebody had to be strong.
- J. IRITANI: Yeah. So you did. You still had the two boys at home then.
- K. KINOSHITA: I could stay in the hospital a long time.
- J. IRITANI: That whole month you stayed?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, my.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then we came back a couple of days before Thanksgiving [1946] to Bakersfield. And then in February. . .
- J. IRITANI: Well, you came back to Bakersfield because you knew that that was not going to benefit you to remain farming there. And so you took the train back to Bakersfield and your folks were already at the old home?
- K. KINOSHITA: Then. . .
- J. IRITANI: And your home was actually the farm that was owned by your brother Jim because he was a citizen and was able to buy it. And he probably wasn't home yet? Farming?

- K. KINOSHITA: No.
- J. IRITANI: He was already home, farming?
- K. KINOSHITA: Raising chickens for eggs.
- J. IRITANI: And so you came back there and then. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Then in February. . .
- J. IRITANI: Of 1947 or 8?
- K. KINOSHITA: Leo Dargatz was farming [in Buttonwillow]. He had three ranches. So, I made a contract--salary and share of the crop. More I raised, the more I get.
- J. IRITANI: Right. That was good.
- K. KINOSHITA: Like cotton supposed to be 500 pound bale. It usually, if you're lucky, you make two bales an acre. So I told him anything I make over two bales, you get half. I made two and a half bales. We put 300 pound nitrate, ammonium nitrate.
- J. IRITANI: Ammonium what? Nitrate.
- K. KINOSHITA: That's what boll's need. [A boll is a pod of cotton.]
- J. IRITANI: So, you just grew cotton for this farmer?
- K. KINOSHITA: Cotton and hay.
- J. IRITANI: And hay. That's alfalfa?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Then 30% and 50% and 300 acres we put in cotton. You see they prorate. You have to have a history. During

the depression, had too much cotton. The price went way down. So they prorate, only 50%.

J. IRITANI: So, you found that that was something not only could you do, but you could profit from that situation.

K. KINOSHITA: And then. . .

J. IRITANI: All right, we're continuing with your experience in Buttonwillow.

K. KINOSHITA: I agreed with Leo Dargatz to take the farm manager job with salary and percentage of the crop.

J. IRITANI: And that worked out well for you.

K. KINOSHITA: It worked out very good.

J. IRITANI: Tell us about when you became ill. What happened?

K. KINOSHITA: After about two years, I had valley fever. [Before that], I went to Buttonwillow town and Dr. Worden told. . .

J. IRITANI: Dr. Warren?

K. KINOSHITA: Worden. Ted Worden.

J. IRITANI: Worden. Okay.

K. KINOSHITA: I told him that my wife was ill, so, I said I will translate what she wanted to say. In Japanese, he said, we don't need to translate Japanese. He starts speaking Japanese.

J. IRITANI: [Laughter]

K. KINOSHITA: I was startled.

J. IRITANI: Oh, my.

K. KINOSHITA: Found out later that he was a missionary's son, and spoke Japanese, Chinese, English.

J. IRITANI: [Laughter] That's W-A-R-D-E-N?

K. KINOSHITA: W-O-R-D-E-N. Ted.

J. IRITANI: W-O-R okay.

K. KINOSHITA: Ted.

J. IRITANI: Ted Worden. Okay.

F. IRITANI: He was the missionary's son? The Japanese missionary's son.

J. IRITANI: He was the doctor.

K. KINOSHITA: They sent him back to the states to go to school.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

J. IRITANI: [Let's] begin with your experience with your illness.

K. KINOSHITA: So Doctor Worden told me to get out of farming. Recuperate. So I quit farming and retired at home and recuperated about six months. Then Toney Misono was going to farm for his brother-in-law in Santa Maria. So, he asked me if I want to be at Heckert's place.

J. IRITANI: Do you remember the Heckert's first names?

K. KINOSHITA: No.

- J. IRITANI: Just Mr. and Mrs. Heckert. Was there a Mr. Heckert there, too?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: He farmed. Mr. Heckert farmed a half section.
- J. IRITANI: Which is how many acres?
- K. KINOSHITA: 160 acres. No. 320. [Cough, Interruption]
- J. IRITANI: He farmed on the west side?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, lake bottom.
- J. IRITANI: Lake bottom. Over by Buena Vista [Lake] area?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: And was it cotton?
- K. KINOSHITA: Mostly cotton.
- J. IRITANI: Okay. We don't really have to know everything about Mr. Heckert, but he was a big farmer.
- K. KINOSHITA: I worked there to take care. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Ten years?
- K. KINOSHITA: Huh?
- M. KINOSHITA: We stayed there ten years?
- K. KINOSHITA: 1950, I started working as a landscape gardener.
- J. IRITANI: But, when you were with the Heckert's, you did both. Your own gardening as well as the Heckert's gardening.

- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: And then after that, after you completed work there, then you went out on your own.
- K. KINOSHITA: When we moved?
- J. IRITANI: I have 1964 [written on his biographical sketch].
- M. KINOSHITA: The folks' place.
- J. IRITANI: Did you just move to Beech Street from Heckert's or did you?
- M. KINOSHITA: No, we stayed for a while at the folks' place. I don't know how long, but. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: About six months.
- J. IRITANI: See, I have here 1963 gardening.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then I worked until 74 years old.
- J. IRITANI: And you retired. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: See, you don't have to do full time, but. . .
- J. IRITANI: So you retired. Do you consider that you really retired when you were age 74?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. I retired.
- J. IRITANI: Or just partially.
- K. KINOSHITA: No, no.
- J. IRITANI: Really retired at 74. Okay.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then, 1997, in September, we moved to San Jose.

- J. IRITANI: What did you do in 1997? That's when you moved up here? In September. Moved to San Jose. All those years, your sons had been up here. They all three went into dentistry.
- K. KINOSHITA: Gene is in oral surgery. Jerry was orthodontist. Denny is an orthodontist.
- J. IRITANI: During those years, I remember how your children came back to Bakersfield periodically and you baby sat for them there as well as coming up to San Jose to baby sit. So now, do you baby sit up here, too?
- M. KINOSHITA: No.
- J. IRITANI: You don't have to because they're all adults now.
- M. KINOSHITA: All grown up.
- J. IRITANI: Shall we talk about your children then? They went through school there while you were at Heckert's. Which school did they attend?
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, Gene. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: When we were at Heckert's, Gene was at J.C. [Bakersfield Junior College]
- J. IRITANI: Oh, when you were at Heckert's?
- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah, I think he was still going to, was still going to high school.

- J. IRITANI: I remember he was on the football team in high school.
- K. KINOSHITA: Jerry and Denny.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, I thought Gene was.
- K. KINOSHITA: Gene was a sports writer for the *Blue and White*.
- IRITANI: For Bakersfield High School.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, he was a sports writer.
- J. IRITANI: And then all the boys grew up and off to school. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah. One by one.
- J. IRITANI: One by one. Became dentists. With specialties. And then they lived here in San Jose. And they encouraged you to come up here. And so how was that move? How difficult was it for you to make that decision?
- K. KINOSHITA: It took twenty years.
- J. IRITANI: What?
- K. KINOSHITA: It took twenty years.
- J. IRITANI: Twenty years to make that decision.
- K. KINOSHITA: And then I had a stroke.
- J. IRITANI: After you moved up here?
- K. KINOSHITA: September, 1997, we moved here. In April 1998, I had a stroke. A light stroke.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, you moved here in September of '97 and then had your stroke in '98.

- K. KINOSHITA: Good thing I moved here.
- J. IRITANI: Well, you're talking very, very well for a person who had a stroke, I think. Your movements are just great. So, it wasn't. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: It was kinda hard.
- K. KINOSHITA: The nurse come and I stayed in the hospital one week and then rehab about three weeks. And after I come home two, three nurse come and one nurse showed me how to balance the check and all that.
- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h. You were re-learning.
- M. KINOSHITA: Physical therapy and occupational therapy.
- K. KINOSHITA: Physical therapy, they make me walk and run. And that's when they put the hand rail and the bar in the back, so I can go walking. . .
- J. IRITANI: So it's just been a year? What month was it you had your stroke?
- K. KINOSHITA: April.
- J. IRITANI: So, it's just a little over a year now. And you were never in your stroke completely unable to use your hands?
- K. KINOSHITA: I got some arthritis. This side I could hardly button it.
- M. KINOSHITA: That was hurt before.
- J. IRITANI: But you can do that now? Can you button. . .

- M. KINOSHITA: No.
- K. KINOSHITA: Still.
- J. IRITANI: Still cannot do the fine motor things. I see.
- K. KINOSHITA: I'm lucky to be 87.
- J. IRITANI: That's great.
- K. KINOSHITA: Her [Michie's] mother lived to be 94.
- J. IRITANI: You have a ways to go, then.
- M. KINOSHITA: Frank's mother, she lived a long time. Nineties?
I don't think I'll live that long.
- [Laughter]
- J. IRITANI: Don't predict. We don't know.
- K. KINOSHITA: Good thing we don't know.
- J. IRITANI: Yeah. Let's detail your boys and their families and what
they're doing. Okay start with Eugene and his family.
He's married to Louise. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Louise Nakanishi. You want the last name, too?
- J. IRITANI: Yes.
- K. KINOSHITA: Louise Nakanishi.
- J. IRITANI: And they have?
- K. KINOSHITA: Two daughters. What's her name?
- M. KINOSHITA: Laurie. She's married to Dean Beaver.
- J. IRITANI: How do you spell that?

- M. KINOSHITA: B-E-A-V-E-R. You know, beaver, the animal? Name.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, just like the animal. Dean? D-E-A-N? Okay, that's Laurie. L-A-U-R-I-E. And then Lisa. Is she married? Laurie became an optometrist, and Lisa is a psychologist did you say? And then Jerry has. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Erin, a daughter and a son.
- J. IRITANI: And Erin is married to. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: William [Schlough], hard to remember his name.
- J. IRITANI: We'll get it later. And the boy is. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: He just finished school.
- J. IRITANI: Well, what did Erin go into?
- M. KINOSHITA: Well, I think she's doing secretary work?
- K. KINOSHITA: Uh-hm.
- J. IRITANI: And then their son, Jerry's son's name is. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Michael.
- J. IRITANI: Michael, right.
- M. KINOSHITA: He's working [inaudible] Systems.
- J. IRITANI: Some computer stuff.
- M. KINOSHITA: I think it's a company, [inaudible] Systems. That's their name, I think.
- J. IRITANI: Whatever.
- K. KINOSHITA: Computer engineer.

- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h.
- K. KINOSHITA: He went to San Diego, University of San Diego.
- J. IRITANI: And he lives around here, too?
- M. KINOSHITA: He's living with his parents.
- J. IRITANI: Okay, and then Denny's married to. . . oh, I didn't mention Jerry is married to. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Janice Okutsu.
- J. IRITANI: O-K-U-T-S-U. And Denny is married to. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Laura.
- J. IRITANI: L-A-U-R-A.
- M. KINOSHITA: Miyazaki.
- J. IRITANI: Miyazaki.
- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: Okay.
- M. KINOSHITA: They have a boy and a girl.
- J. IRITANI: And their names are. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Matthew.
- J. IRITANI: Matthew is a what? Where is he working?
- M. KINOSHITA: Well, he. . .
- J. IRITANI: Is he still in school?
- M. KINOSHITA: No, no, he graduated, but he. . .
- J. IRITANI: Looking for it.

- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah, looking for it. They want to start some kind of business with his friend.
- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h. Good for him. Entrepreneurial, or whatever. We'll see.
- K. KINOSHITA: After he graduated [University of California at] Davis, he went to Lake Tahoe, teaching. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: One week there.
- K. KINOSHITA: . . . people how to ski.
- M. KINOSHITA: Boarding. . .
- J. IRITANI: Skate. . . ski boarding. . . or snow boarding. Snow boarding.
- M. KINOSHITA: Oh, snow boarding.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, so that's his hobby. A hobby that he got some money for.
- F. IRITANI: I think that clicked [his tape recorder]. Still going?
- J. IRITANI: Uh-hm.
- F. IRITANI: Oh, I thought I heard the sound. . .
- J. IRITANI: And then there's
- M. KINOSHITA: Kerri. K-E-R-R-I.
- J. IRITANI: Okay. And she's a student? Where does she go?
- M. KINOSHITA: Community College in San Jose.

- J. IRITANI: In San Jose. Okay. She's a student. Now, your great. . .
Laurie's little baby's name is. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: What's her name?
- M. KINOSHITA: Ashley.
- J. IRITANI: Ashley. So, she is your one great grandchild who
presently is how many months old?
- M. KINOSHITA: Two and a half?
- J. IRITANI: Two and a half months old.
- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah, almost three months. Next month she'll be three
months.
- J. IRITANI: So, that's the way the family keeps expanding.
- K. KINOSHITA: Gene's wife [grandmother Louise] takes care of her. When
she [mother Laurie] goes to work.
- M. KINOSHITA: She works two days a week. Louise watched the baby one
day and her husband watch the baby one day.
- J. IRITANI: Okay, very good. Now, I would like to talk about church,
and go way back to your childhood when you did first
attend the Japanese Methodist Episcopal Mission. And
from what I gather from Reverend [Edward H.] Thomas'
writing, it was probably when you were eight years old
that you went with Reverend Niwa, Seiichi Niwa. I

remember Rev. Niwa. My mother spoke very highly of him, always.

K. KINOSHITA: He came, picked us up. [Cough]

J. IRITANI: Could you tell us about that time? What do you remember? Anything other than that you were picked up. . . all three of you boys were picked up?

M. KINOSHITA: Can I get you water?

K. KINOSHITA: Went to church, but I don't remember too much. But when I was in high school, you know Toyohiko Kagawa [a Japanese evangelist, social reformer and Christian leader]?

J. IRITANI: Yeah, Toyohiko Kagawa came to Bakersfield.

K. KINOSHITA: He gave a sermon at a meeting at First Methodist Church. And then he spoke in Japanese at our church. And then he told the difference between Buddhism, Shinto and. . .

J. IRITANI: For the Japanese, he spoke about the background of the Japanese religious history, then.

K. KINOSHITA: He talked about Shinto official values, raised in Shinto and Buddhism and tell the difference between Christian. And then after that, Reverend Fukada, I forget his first name. . .

J. IRITANI: I don't remember. Rev. Fukada is the only thing that I knew him as. Or Fukada *sensei*.

- K. KINOSHITA: And that's when I think about being. . .
- J. IRITANI: You joined the church.
- K. KINOSHITA: Then after. . . [Interruption]
Susie Saito still living?
- J. IRITANI: I haven't heard. I haven't heard from her. I haven't checked on her lately. They [the Saito family] were very active in the church. Did you get involved with the youth group? Or the. . . before the war, did you get. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Epworth League.
- J. IRITANI: Epworth League.
- K. KINOSHITA: We went to the convention in Oakland [NCYPCC--Northern California Young Peoples Christian Conference, a gathering of high school and young adults from various Protestant Japanese Christian churches--Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, etc.] Stayed at the minister's, Suzuki?
- J. IRITANI: Ah, Lester. Lester Suzuki. He just died.
- K. KINOSHITA: I knew his brother, Harvey.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, really?
- M. KINOSHITA: He was in Block 6.
- K. KINOSHITA: He came to Block 6.

- J. IRITANI: Oh, that's why. But at the time that you stayed at Lester's place, it was before the war. So you were still a young adult.
- K. KINOSHITA: That was in Oakland.
- J. IRITANI: I know they lived in Berkeley.
- K. KINOSHITA: They were still going to school. I know Harvey. What a small world.
- J. IRITANI: Yes. You never know.
- K. KINOSHITA: He recognized me.
- J. IRITANI: Really, oh, he remembered when you came to the Epworth League meeting. Or was it the NCYPCC then?
- K. KINOSHITA: I don't know. But anyway, took us to dinner. That was before I married.
- J. IRITANI: Of course, I realize that. And so your involvement with the church before the war was just in the youth and young adult group. And then when you came back to Bakersfield, did you get right back into the activities of the church?
- K. KINOSHITA: Not so much.
- J. IRITANI: Not right away. I know you became involved in it, because you were a very important part of the church.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, I was Pastor-Parish Committee chairman.

- J. IRITANI: Yes, for many, many, many years. We never changed people. [Laughter]
- K. KINOSHITA: That's *urusai* [annoying] work, you know. Oh, I know, Mrs. Tatsuno and . . .
- M. KINOSHITA: You were treasurer a little while?
- K. KINOSHITA: Mrs. Tatsuno and I were the treasurers, handled the money.
- J. IRITANI: Right after the war? Right after you got back, or. . .
- M. KINOSHITA: Was it before the war?
- K. KINOSHITA: Oh, I don't know.
- J. IRITANI: I know Mr. Tatsuno was the treasurer after they came back for a while. Yep, the church has been there a long time, and people have come and people have gone. And it's still there.
- K. KINOSHITA: Your father [Yoneshiro George Ono] really took care of the church.
- J. IRITANI: Well, he always supported the church, that I knew from my childhood. Yes. But, he died in '51, so it was up to the Nisei after that. And the church still stands. It still goes on.
- M. KINOSHITA: Yes.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Part-time, retired [minister].

- J. IRITANI: Yes. That can't be helped. Okay. Was there anything else that we missed. I know that we did not really mention about when Yosh was born. . . . But first, you were born in 1912. Jim or Hisato was born in 1914. Sid Sadao was born in 1916, and then your mother died in 1918, and you all went back to Japan and. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Stayed about a year and a half.
- J. IRITANI: About a year and a half, and your father re-married his wife's cousin [Maki] and all of you came back to America, to Bakersfield, and then Yoshiye who later married and became a Murotani was born in 1920 and Toshiko Phyllis was born in 1922.
- M. KINOSHITA: '21.
- J. IRITANI: '21. Okay so it was just one year between Yosh and Toshiko. And was there anything else about you or your family or your memories of the past, or what you're doing right now, that you'd like to talk about?
- M. KINOSHITA: [Chuckle]
- J. IRITANI: I know you're still gardening. I saw your garden in the back.
- K. KINOSHITA: The lawn, I can't walk. [He cannot mow the lawn.]

- J. IRITANI: You can't do that now. But the last time I visited last September, was it?
- M. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: You showed me your garden in the back, your vegetable garden. Are you able to work in the vegetable garden, now?
- M. KINOSHITA: Too hard. He's not working like last year.
- J. IRITANI: Not like last year. Well, you're not a young chicken anymore. We all know that. [Chuckle]
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, lucky to be alive.
- J. IRITANI: That's right. Was there anything else that you remember that you did as a child that we have not mentioned or as an adult, that you can remember, either one of you?
- F. IRITANI: Was the JACL [Japanese American Citizens League] very active in Bakersfield.
- K. KINOSHITA: No.
- F. IRITANI: Not even before the war?
- J. IRITANI: There must have been something before the war. I don't think they were. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Delano was pretty strong.
- J. IRITANI: And they still have their chapter.
- F. IRITANI: There was a Bakersfield group. . .

J. IRITANI:

They started it after the war, and then they disbanded. And now the [Central California JACL] District Governor would like to have a group start again. I talked to her. Anyway, if you think this is the end, you can't think of any other experiences that you'd like to recount?

Well, I would like to say thank you very much for your time and your hospitality and for letting us come and tape your life story, because your life story is unique. It's different, and I think it's important for other people to know that this has occurred to you. And not only have you survived, but you and your family have thrived. So, I say congratulations to how you raised your family and what you have now. Beautiful. I would love to meet the boys again. They were kids, and now they're all adults. So thank you very much, both Kaneto and Michie.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Session 2, July 27, 1999]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

J. IRITANI: [This is the second] session, today's date in July 27, 1999. We interviewed Kaneto Kinoshita with his wife [Michie] present and my husband [Frank] present yesterday, but, Frank has gone to read his paper. So, we have just Michie sitting in with us today. There were a few things I thought of overnight that I would like to ask Kaneto to clarify or to explain or to make any additional comments about.

First is, when the FBI arrested you, first of all, they came to your house to arrest you?

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.

J. IRITANI: How many agents were with them? Was the sheriff deputy, also?

K. KINOSHITA: A couple of FBI men. I guess they told me they were FBI when they questioned me. And after they picked me up. .

- J. IRITANI: Well, before they left with you, did they permit you to get some of your belongings together to take?
- K. KINOSHITA: No. It was just whatever I was wearing and belongings and things they brought it afterwards.
- J. IRITANI: To the [Kern County] jail?
- K. KINOSHITA: To the jail, yeah.
- J. IRITANI: And by this time your cousin Tom Kinoshita and your father had already been arrested at home, as well. And they were in jail.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: And so you were also taken to the jail. How many people. . . how many Japanese people. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: There were about twenty five or thirty from Delano picked up, and five from Bakersfield, and three out of five our family.
- J. IRITANI: That's right. And there were no people from Arvin and such?
- K. KINOSHITA: No.
- J. IRITANI: Oh-h-h. Okay. And then members of your family were able to bring some notions and underwear and other clothes to you at the jail.

- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Somebody brought over clothes and shaving kit, all that, thing I need to the jail.
- J. IRITANI: You were treated all right as far as the jail authorities. . . there was no abuse at any time?
- K. KINOSHITA: No. They treated us all right, but we had diarrhea. . . . the whole group. I don't know what they put in their coffee or whatever we ate, because everybody had diarrhea.
- J. IRITANI: So, how many. . . you must have been in a number of cells. You couldn't have all been in one cell.
- K. KINOSHITA: No. There must be about eight, nine cells, but they didn't confine us in each cell. We just [inaudible] when we can.
- J. IRITANI: You could wander around?
- K. KINOSHITA: We did in five, six cells. We were confined in the cell.
- J. IRITANI: It was comfortable enough so that you were able to sleep. Not that it was comfortable, but you were able to get to sleep.
- K. KINOSHITA: We weren't confined in each cell.
- J. IRITANI: So, you could get some exercise as well. And then you were taken to Tujunga. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Tujunga Immigration Center.
- J. IRITANI: In Tujunga, did they interrogate you there? Did somebody. . .

- K. KINOSHITA: They kept us in Tujunga for about ten days.
- J. IRITANI: But, you were not questioned?
- K. KINOSHITA: Not interrogated, or anything. We were just kept there.
- J. IRITANI: So, the only questions that were asked of you were by the original FBI men? Or did they even ask you any questions?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, no question was asked in Bakersfield or Tujunga.
- J. IRITANI: Except to establish who you were.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, that's right. They make you write in a paper when you came [to America], where you were born, what ship you came on, and they asked you the same questions the next day to see if you duplicate. . .
- J. IRITANI: Or change your answers.
- K. KINOSHITA: Otherwise you're lying if you say a different thing. They tried to see if you could put down the truth or not.
- J. IRITANI: And because you came as a baby, did you know your ship's name?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, I didn't have no idea what ship I came on.
- J. IRITANI: I would think not.
- K. KINOSHITA: But, I presume it was smaller than 10,000. In 1920, the ship we came on was 10,000 ton.

- J. IRITANI: So, we know your experience basically in Santa Fe. Was there anything that happened in Santa Fe before you were questioned by that lawyer? Can you remember experiences in Santa Fe?
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, we were just confined about forty in each barrack. . .
- J. IRITANI: Were they long barracks just like. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: Long barrack, no partition.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, no partition. It was all men.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, then they took turns at a court hearing. . .
- J. IRITANI: But before they started those hearings by the lawyers, were you participating in the activities of the camp?
- K. KINOSHITA: Each person's supposed to do a chore everyday, helping with the cooking or peeling. . . getting ready for the meal you had to peel the potatoes and things like that. A lot of the older men couldn't do it so, I had to. . . I volunteered to help take turns for each one that couldn't do their chore.
- J. IRITANI: So, it was a matter of everyone being assigned, but not everyone being able to do it.
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, So, I took their turn.

- J. IRITANI: Right. And then, in July you were interrogated or interviewed by that lawyer. And you had gone in in April?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah.
- J. IRITANI: So, April, May, June, July. It was about four months, three, four months.
- K. KINOSHITA: They released us.
- J. IRITANI: Just you and your father.
- K. KINOSHITA: We came back to Poston on the fourth of July.
- J. IRITANI: But, you and your father were the only ones released. Tom Kinoshita was not.
- K. KINOSHITA: He was detained another year.
- J. IRITANI: And neither you nor your father were officers of any organization? So, you could see no reason for either one of you, even now, you can see no reason for the FBI to have arrested.
- K. KINOSHITA: No reason. They just picked us up. Somebody, I don't know why. . .
- J. IRITANI: Your name was on a list. Well, considering that the FBI picked up people December 7, the day of the bombing, they had their lists ready. Yes, they were picked up December 7. I've talked to a number of the children of those people.

So, I'm going to move on, I think we've covered that adequately, huh? Michie, did you have a comment?

M. KINOSHITA: I want to say, they checked all the mail.

J. IRITANI: Oh-h, yes. When you received your mail. . .

K. KINOSHITA: I volunteered to look after these people, the *Issei* couldn't speak English, helping translate the mail that wives sent to Santa Fe. The Korean group check over the letters the wives sent to the internees, and we criticized the censoring of the mail, and told the post office official that the letters need not to be censored because it was family mail and the wife telling the husband that they evacuated into internment camp safely and everything's okay.

J. IRITANI: And those kinds of letters were censored. Were all those letters then written in English originally.

K. KINOSHITA: No, the letters were written in Japanese.

J. IRITANI: Then, how could they. . . . Were there Japanese speaking people that could censor them?

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. Korean people. They had Korean people reading the letters, so I told the post officials that there was no need to censor. And the official didn't know what the letters were all about.

J. IRITANI: So everyone could write in Japanese and then you said something about translating for some of the older people.

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. The old people would read the letter and I listen and tell them, the officials what's written in English.

J. IRITANI: So, things got a little difficult there in Santa Fe for some people. Okay.

I'm going to move on, and talk about your obtaining your citizenship. We really didn't touch on that during the interview yesterday. That was in 1952 the Walter-McCarran Act was passed that permitted people from Japan and Korea to become citizens. All other Asians had already received their right to naturalization.

K. KINOSHITA: I became a . . .

J. IRITANI: Well, tell us how you first heard about it, or read about, and what steps you took to get it.

K. KINOSHITA: I read and heard about that Japanese could be naturalized citizens, so I had to go night school.

J. IRITANI: Where did you go?

K. KINOSHITA: I don't quite remember, but . . .

J. IRITANI: It wasn't at the high school?

K. KINOSHITA: Something like that. I had to learn all about American government, democratic system, and who the president is,

the first president of the United States, and all that pertained to naturalizing. I had to go to night school every night until we got our citizenship. I was forty years old then.

J. IRITANI: Right. But, you had all this while you were in junior high or high school, right? Many years ago.

K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. For me it was just a repeat.

J. IRITANI: That's right. And in your class were members of. . . people from where?

K. KINOSHITA: There's some older people from Greece and Italy and a lot of Filipinos. A lot were taking the test same time.

J. IRITANI: And you were the only. . .

K. KINOSHITA: I'm the only Japanese taking the test.

J. IRITANI: Have you any idea if any other *Issei* in Bakersfield became citizens?

K. KINOSHITA: No other *Issei* was in that class.

J. IRITANI: But, later did you hear from any of them that they did obtain citizenship?

K. KINOSHITA: No. I didn't see any *nihonjin* [Japanese].

J. IRITANI: No one talked about it later? And at the time that you became a citizen, you also added your first name.
[Kenneth].

- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah. I was known as Kaneto Kinoshita, then when I had my naturalization, became a naturalized citizen, I added Kenneth to my first name.
- J. IRITANI: So, you became Kenneth Kaneto Kinoshita. And you have always used that combination since. On legal papers.
- K. KINOSHITA: On legal papers, I put Kenneth Kaneto Kinoshita.
- J. IRITANI: Right. And after, I remember Emma Buckmaster teaching English to our *Issei*. My mother was one of those who attended at her house. And so I was wondering. . . we haven't talked about Emma relative to activities at the church, before the war, during the war, and after the war. Would you like to recount some of your memories of Emma Buckmaster?
- K. KINOSHITA: Well, Emma Buckmaster was primarily a first grade teacher at William Penn School.
- J. IRITANI: But, not your teacher.
- K. KINOSHITA: I had her in first grade.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, you did. Oh, I didn't realize that. [Chuckle] This is something new for me. Oh.
- K. KINOSHITA: She was a Sunday school teacher.
- J. IRITANI: I know she came to our little Japanese Church. I believe she said 1927.

- K. KINOSHITA: And she did a lot of helping the Japanese, the *Issei* and Nisei. And helped a lot of people to be Americanized.
- J. IRITANI: Do you remember some of your own experiences with Emma, any incidents or anything? Mostly probably after the war. Because before the war, she was mainly with the Sunday School.
- K. KINOSHITA: She helped the wives who came over [war brides from Japan], and sympathized and tried to help them.
- J. IRITANI: Michie, do you remember Emma helping?
- M. KINOSHITA: I think she came to visit me.
- J. IRITANI: At your house. She was one of these people who. . . she was Caucasian, not Japanese, knew no Japanese words. . . . I remember her saying, "I know *ohayo*." She never really learned Japanese, and yet she was with us all those years until her death.
- M. KINOSHITA: I remember Reverend [Dillon] Throckmorton, he came to visit.
- J. IRITANI: To your house? Rev. Throckmorton came, too. Rev. Dillon Throckmorton, I remember him. Wonderful man.
- M. KINOSHITA: And Mrs., too.
- J. IRITANI: Oh, she came as well?
- M. KINOSHITA: Ah, I don't remember she came or not, but anyway Rev. . .

J. IRITANI: But anyway Rev. Throckmorton and Emma Buckmaster came. And then after we all returned to Bakersfield, and after the church was used as a hostel. . . I know my father and Emma helped to clean. . . clear out some of the things so people could live there in the church building.

Temporarily, of course. And then I remember how they had the *Issei* gatherings, and Emma always picked up all those *Issei* who were not driving. And you people attended not only the English services that were held, but you attended many of the Japanese language programs, too.

K. KINOSHITA: We didn't come home one year. We were in Arkansas. That part, I don't know.

J. IRITANI: But, after you came back, do you remember the activities at the church? Not particularly? Yesterday you mentioned that you were on Pastor-Parish Committee. Well, you were really, although some of us belonged to the committee, also, you were basically a committee of one. You had the contact with each minister each time. And we all depended on that.

K. KINOSHITA: Well, that Pastor-Parish Committee was kinda a real headache job.

J. IRITANI: [Laughter] Because the Pastor-Parish Committee has to work in between what the minister is and what the people want. Yeah. Weren't you also Lay Leader? Lay Leader of the church for many, many years.

M. KINOSHITA: Yes.

J. IRITANI: You were. You may not remember the title, but that's what you were. And we all depended on you. I'll let you know that. And there were some lean times. Times when not too many people attended the church. And I remember one Sunday, when it was one of the women ministers, I don't think it was Bobbie Corson, but it was the other woman minister we had, and there were Michie, Kaneto and me attending church service that morning. Yes.

M. KINOSHITA: Her name is. . .

J. IRITANI: I've forgotten her name. She went on over to the Congregational Church which she was before she took our church.

M. KINOSHITA: What was her name?

J. IRITANI: Well, anyway, I don't think it really matters at this point. But, no, sometimes there were just a few of us, but one time there were just the three, I remember we three.

M. KINOSHITA: You remember.

J. IRITANI: Yes, and I remember many times when it was just we three and Yosh. And yet that church is surviving. They are still meeting. They might not be growing, but they are continuing to meet, and I say, "More power to them!"

K. KINOSHITA: Kim.

J. IRITANI: Kim Combs.

M. KINOSHITA: He helps a lot.

K. KINOSHITA: He's secretary. He writes up all the. . .

J. IRITANI: He sends the newsletter.

K. KINOSHITA: He sends me the church letter.

J. IRITANI: Right. We get it, too. So, it is continuing to operate, and I'm glad, because it's a church with a long history, 1907 until now. Okay, were there any other subjects that I didn't think about that touched your lives in the past or some experience that you've had? Now you're not just the two of you as it was in 1940, additionally the three boys and their three wives, and each of their children, and now one great grandchild. And the family keeps growing. And they're all doing very, very well.

K. KINOSHITA: Just two of us.

[Laughter]

- J. IRITANI: And back to two of you, right.
- K. KINOSHITA: Every morning I wake up, I pinch myself.
- J. IRITANI: You're still here. [Laughter]
- K. KINOSHITA: I'm still alive.
- J. IRITANI: That's right. And your arthritis and everything may be there and painful, but you were out there this morning. I was surprised. Frank says Kaneto's out there digging *gobo* [long burdock roots].
- F. IRITANI: The water keeps running and I thought it was the toilet or something, I used the bathroom and I looked out the window and he's out there. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: I tried watering, and get a trowel and loosen up. Way down there and *gobo* is tight. That's how come when you do commercially, we used to. . .
- J. IRITANI: Oh, you grew *gobo* before the war? Commercially?
- K. KINOSHITA: Yeah, commercially. About one acre *gobo*. In those days, we sold a bunch about like that for twenty five cents.
- J. IRITANI: [Laughter] And now?
- K. KINOSHITA: Now you pay \$3.00.
- J. IRITANI: For a pound?
- K. KINOSHITA: A pound.

- J. IRITANI: Tell us what else you have growing out there in the garden. That's quite a nice garden you have. In your garden here. You have your *gobo* and. . .
- K. KINOSHITA: I'm trying to raise everything I like to eat. [Laughter]
- J. IRITANI: Good idea. Which is, bitter melon, and you have *nasu* Japanese eggplant only, I guess,
- K. KINOSHITA: I've got chili pepper.
- J. IRITANI: Chili pepper. Is it the hot kind?
- K. KINOSHITA: No, the mild.
- J. IRITANI: The mild kind. Because I know in the past, you used to talk about making chili con carne, hot.
- K. KINOSHITA: No, I don't make it hot.
- J. IRITANI: You don't do that anymore.
- K. KINOSHITA: I don't like anything too hot.
- J. IRITANI: Not any more. And you have beautiful tomatoes and what else is growing out there?
- K. KINOSHITA: Cucumber.
- M. KINOSHITA: Cucumber and string beans.
- J. IRITANI: You have your own farmer's market. [Laughter] And you have that pear tree that produces three different oriental pears.

K. KINOSHITA: We had about thirty fruits last year, bigger size. It'll grow bigger, but I had to put a brace on there because the limb is real fragile.

J. IRITANI: And there are so many fruits on each one.

K. KINOSHITA: And they're going to get bigger.

The tape ended at this point, so I thanked Kaneto and Michie for this interview.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[End of interview]

NAMES LIST

NAME	IDENTIFICATION	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION	PAGE INTRODUCED
Kanetaro Kinoshita	Father	Kenneth Kaneto Kinoshita	2
Hisayo Ogawa Kinoshita	Mother	"	2
Tomoichi Tom Kinoshita	Cousin	"	3
Jim Hisato Kinoshita	Brother	"	4
Sid Sadao Kinoshita	Brother	"	4
Maki Nakagawa Kinoshita	Father's second wife	"	4
Michie Nakamura Kinoshita	Wife	"	6
Eugene Hitoshi Kinoshita (Gene)	Son	"	7
Gerald Masaru Kinoshita (Jerry)	Son	"	7
Dennis Kenji Kinoshita (Denny)	Son	"	11
Reverend Dillon Throckmorton	Minister, Trinity Methodist Church	"	13
Mr. Omori	Resident of Block 6	"	19
Saburo Kido	President of National JACL	"	19
Dorothy Omori	Resident of Block 6	Taeko Joanne Iritani	20
Yoshiye Kinoshita Murotani	Sister	Kenneth Kaneto Kinoshita	21
Guy Murotani	Husband of sister	"	21
Toshiko Phyllis Kinoshita	Sister	"	21
Mrs. Higashi	Neighbor in Block 6	"	24
Leo Dargatz	Farmer in Buttonwillow	"	30
Dr. Ted Worden	Doctor in Buttonwillow	"	31
Toney Misono	Friend in Bakersfield	"	32
Mr. and Mrs. Heckert	Employer in Bakersfield	"	32
Michie's mother	Mother of Michie Kinoshita	"	38
Frank's mother	Mother of Frank Iritani	Frank Iritani	38

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NAME	IDENTIFICATION	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION	PAGE INTRODUCED
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Laurie Kinoshita Beaver	Daughter of Eugene	"	38
Dean Beaver	Husband of granddaughter	"	38
Lisa Kinoshita	Daughter of Eugene	"	39
Erin Kinoshita Schlough	Daughter of Gerald	"	39
William Schlough	Husband of granddaughter	"	39
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Laura Miyazaki Kinoshita	Son Dennis' wife	"	40
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